



General Assembly

Fifty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 November 1997

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 11th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 4 November 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Dumitriu (Vice-Chairman) (Romania)

Contents

Agenda item 85: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space
(*continued*)

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to
Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*)
(*continued*)

Organization of work

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.



In the absence of Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe), Mr. Dumitriu (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 85: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (continued) (A/52/20 and A/52/307)

1. **Mr. Danesh-Yazdi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that global involvement in outer space explorations was the best way to guarantee that they would be for peaceful purposes. His own Government had recently established a national consultative committee for space activities to integrate its action in the field and to facilitate regional and international cooperation for the benefit of all. Emphasis should be placed on transparency in outer space activities and on exchange of data and non-discriminatory sharing of benefits between developed and developing countries. In that connection, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) could play a crucial role and should coordinate its work with the related work of the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee.

2. The convening of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) in 1999 would provide an opportunity to strengthen multilateral cooperation on space-related issues through a discussion of mechanisms for cooperation and of current international outer space law. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications could bring many of the practical benefits of space science and technology to developing countries on a non-discriminatory basis, and the Office for Outer Space Affairs should encourage the establishment of regional networks for the purpose, particularly in Asia and the Pacific.

3. The rapid evolution of technology called for the development of legal instruments to ensure that space would be used for the benefit of present and future generations. The contamination of the environment by space debris was a matter for concern, and the question should be addressed by the Legal Subcommittee as well as the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS. The agenda of the Legal Subcommittee needed to include additional substantive items, and the delicate question of the geostationary orbit should be maintained in its agenda.

4. He welcomed the fact that more attention had been given to the principles of rotation and geographical representation in electing the officers of COPUOS and its Subcommittees, thereby enabling the Committee to

accommodate better the interests of all nations, particularly the developing countries.

5. **Mr. Kohara** (Japan) observed that COPUOS was helping to promote international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space largely through the exchange of information and the establishment of a regulatory legal framework. As space technologies developed and the international environment changed, COPUOS would have to respond to the new needs of the international community.

6. COPUOS had made headway in preparing for UNISPACE III. Japan supported the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee concerning practical arrangements and particularly welcomed the idea that the Conference should consider how to promote international cooperation in Earth observation activities in ways that met the needs of both developed and developing countries.

7. Regarding organizational matters, Japan welcomed the adoption of the COPUOS Chairman's package proposal (A/52/20, annex I, para. 2) because the suggested reforms would better equip COPUOS and its two Subcommittees to respond to new developments and to take into account the needs of developing countries. His own Government was committed to maintaining balanced cooperative relations with both developing and industrialized countries regarding the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

8. **Mr. Apunte** (Ecuador), welcoming the adoption by COPUOS of the Chairman's package proposal on working methods, and hailing the establishment by Brazil and Mexico of the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, strongly endorsed the Punta del Este Declaration adopted by the Third Space Conference of the Americas. The plan of action for regional cooperation in space matters also adopted by that Conference signalled the intention to promote programmes in areas such as prevention, early warning, rescue operations and mitigation of the effects of natural disasters. In that connection, Ecuador and a number of other Member States would be submitting in the appropriate Committee a draft resolution on the strengthening of international cooperation with a view to mitigating the ravaging effects of the El Niño phenomenon and improving early-warning systems. His delegation endorsed paragraph 73 of the COPUOS report (A/52/20), because adequate access to satellite information was crucial for the developing countries.

9. The question of the geostationary orbit should remain on the agenda of the Committee's Legal Subcommittee and should be considered together with the closely linked topic

of the definition and delimitation of outer space. His delegation favoured the adoption of a special, *sui generis* legal regime to regulate access to and utilization of the geostationary orbit, taking into account its special nature and technical characteristics, the fact that it was a limited resource, and the special geographical situation of the equatorial countries in relation to it. Other related topics that should be pursued were the question of space debris and responsibility of the States of registry to avoid saturating the geostationary orbit with satellites that had outlived their usefulness.

10. **Mr. Ayewah** (Nigeria) said that increased opportunities to utilize outer space for the general improvement of the quality of life and the acceleration of social and economic development in all countries had paralleled rapid progress in space technology. Such benefits were best realized when there was a strong commitment to promoting international cooperation and it was encouraging that COPUOS had been playing a leading role in promoting such cooperation through its programmes, which widely disseminated the benefits of space activities to all countries, particularly the developing ones.

11. The United Nations Programme on Space Applications had very important responsibilities, including the development of indigenous capability, and extended welcome support for the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education affiliated to the United Nations. Steady progress had been made towards the opening of the United Nations Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for English-speaking African countries in Nigeria. Many positive responses had been received from participating countries in anticipation of the meeting of the governing board and a first academic programme should commence shortly. The primary goal in establishing regional centres was to enhance, from a regional perspective, academic and professional capabilities as well as technical infrastructure in space science and technology. Each centre would become part of a network covering specific programme elements relating to space technology in its region. His country had established a national users' forum in relation to a project entitled "Cooperation Information Network Linking Scientists and Professionals in Africa (COPINE)". That project would establish an efficient communication network among African and European professionals and scientists at all levels and would allow for the exchange of valuable information on health care, agriculture, education, science and technology, and the management and monitoring of natural resources and the environment. He urged the United Nations Programme on

Space Applications to continue to provide assistance in that area.

12. In order to maximize the spin-off benefits of space technology, his Government was devoting enormous resources to capacity-building in the areas of meteorology, remote sensing, geodesic studies, photogrammetry and cartography. Those courses were bilingual and attracted participants from both French-speaking and English-speaking countries. Thanks to bilateral cooperation with international institutions, notably from India, the programme in radio astronomy and basic space sciences was continuing to be improved. Cooperation continued with the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration in the area of satellite geodesy and geodynamics research and it was hoped that a permanent observation station would be established in Nigeria as part of, *inter alia*, the Global Network for Very-Long-Baseline Interferometry (VLBI) and the Cooperative International Global Positioning Network (CIGNET). With technical assistance from the Government of China, nationwide networking and telecommunications facilities were being improved and daily nationwide television weather forecasting and reporting had begun. The National Centre for Remote Sensing in Jos had become fully operational, and its facilities were being upgraded.

13. It was encouraging that great progress had been made in preparing UNISPACE III. He called upon all concerned to make the necessary contribution to the successful holding of the Conference. In the meantime, international support must be increased with a view to the full implementation of the recommendations of the predecessor Conference. He hoped that all Member States would participate actively in UNISPACE III in a spirit of partnership and collaborative endeavour in order to ensure the use of space technology for the common good of humankind.

14. **Ms. Arystanbekova** (Kazakhstan) said that her country, which had been the site of the first launching of an artificial Earth satellite 40 years earlier, had, since becoming a member of COPUOS, been actively involved in international work in the field. Kazakhstan was taking steps to implement the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82); and was ready to participate in the preparations for UNISPACE III, where important decisions on the peaceful uses of outer space would be taken.

15. Broad international cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes was vital to peace and international security. Accordingly, Kazakhstan had ratified the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of

States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and had given legislative approval for accession to the other major international agreements on space activity. Furthermore, her Government had recently undertaken a number of aerospace joint ventures and investment projects and was working on a set of proposals for cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, China, the United States of America, Germany, France and Pakistan on remote sensing and natural resource studies and various scientific research projects.

16. With its major space infrastructure, notably the Baikonur launch site, Kazakhstan aspired to occupy an appropriate place among the world's space powers. It was currently preparing for the second space flight by a Kazakh cosmonaut, and in the comparatively brief period since independence it had managed to create its own national aerospace sector and develop international relations in the field. It was already a member of international space agencies in the Commonwealth of Independent States, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, it maintained working relations with space centres in the United States and India, and it had participated in various international aerospace conferences. Her Government's aerospace policy emphasized the observance of international law, the peaceful uses of outer space, and international cooperation in space activities.

17. COPUOS should encourage practical applications of space science and technology for environmental purposes. The results of environmental research should be widely disseminated among interested States, many of which, like Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, were jointly studying ways of minimizing any harmful environmental impact of space activities.

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (continued) (A/52/23 (Part VI), chap. X)

Omnibus draft resolution on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/52/23 (Part VI), chap. X, para. 20)

18. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee, proposed the following revisions to draft resolution A to correct some discrepancies in relation to the consensus text contained in General Assembly resolution 51/224. In the twentieth preambular paragraph,

the words "to hear the views of the representatives of the Territories as well as Governments and organizations in the region, in order" should be deleted; in the twenty-first preambular paragraph the words "including the representatives of the Territories" should be deleted; in the twenty-second preambular paragraph, the words "the Special Committee considers" should be inserted in the first line after "*Mindful also* in this connection that"; in the twenty-second preambular paragraph, the word "is" in the fourth line should be replaced by "as"; and in operative paragraph 3 the word "updated" in the second line should be deleted.

19. The following revisions should be made to draft resolution B, section I, on American Samoa. First, two new preambular paragraphs should be inserted before the current first preambular paragraph and would read: "*Noting* the report by the administering Power that most American Samoan leaders express satisfaction with the island's present relationship with the United States of America," and "*Noting also* the non-participation of representatives of the people of American Samoa in the last two regional seminars.". The beginning of the third preambular paragraph should also be revised to read "*Noting further*" rather than "*Noting*".

20. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) expressed his satisfaction with the informal dialogue which had preceded the introduction of the revisions and was grateful to other delegations for their assistance. His delegation fully supported the oral revisions, and he hoped that the Committee would continue to work on a consensus basis. He looked forward to continuing the informal dialogue with the Special Committee in the hope that progress would continue towards the goal of decolonization by the year 2000.

21. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the oral revisions without a vote.

22. *It was so decided.*

23. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution as a whole, as orally revised, without a vote.

24. *The omnibus draft resolution on small Territories (A/52/23 (Part VI), chap. X, para. 20) as a whole, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.*

Organization of work

25. **The Chairman** drew members' attention to the letter received from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee in document A/C.4/52/7.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.